



**Zeke's Island Reserve  
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, November 12, 2013 - 3 pm**

**Attendance**

<b><u>LAC Members</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation/Interest</u></b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>
Mr. John Carty	Commercial User	No
Mr. Nathan Henry	Division of Archives and History	No
Dr. Anthony Snider	UNCW EVS	No
Ms. Renee Weeks	NC Aquarium	No
Mr. Jeff Owen	Division of Parks and Recreation	Yes
<b><u>Others</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation/Interest</u></b>	
Hope Sutton	DCM/NCCR Stewardship Coordinator & Southern Sites Manager	

**Reserve Program Update**

**Administrative Update**

- *Staffing News*
  - Kate Brogan was hired in May 2013 as the Reserve's temporary Communications Specialist. Kate is focusing on the Reserve website, social media, and public relations campaigns related to visitor use at Reserve sites.
  - Marie Davis was also hired in May 2013 as the Reserve's temporary Environmental Educator located in the Wilmington office. Marie is conducting a variety of general public programming in the region, including on-site field trips, public presentations, and a paddling trip.
  - Lori Davis, Education Coordinator for the Reserve, recently received the 2013 Environmental Educator of the Year Award from the Environmental Educators of North Carolina.
- *Budget Update*

The Reserve receives funding from both the State of N.C. and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for operation of the program and a budget update was provided for the current fiscal year. The Reserve's total budget for FY13-14 is \$877,653 (\$265,000 from State appropriations and \$612,653 from NOAA, 90% of the NOAA funds support operation of the N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve

(NCNERR)); this is a \$34,754 reduction in federal funding for operation of the NCNERR and excludes any external competitive grant funds.

- *Rules and Policies Review Process*

The Reserve is not pursuing the update of its rules and policies at this time.

## Reserve Communications

### *Website*

- The Reserve is in the process of transferring its website to a new DENR hosting portal. This will help brand the Reserve as part of the Division of Coastal Management and establish consistency between DENR agencies, as well as providing more comprehensive and current information for website visitors in an easy-to-navigate format. The new website will be published in December 2013.
- The Hot Topics section of the current website is updated weekly to announce upcoming events/meetings, review projects and field trips, and establish a consistent “voice” for the Reserve that keeps website visitors excited about our work. The Hot Topics Archive can be found at the following link and will also be available on our new website:  
<http://www.nccoastalreserve.net/Resources/Hot-Topics-Archives/225.aspx>

### *Facebook*

- The Reserve has three Facebook pages: Rachel Carson, Masonboro Island, and a general N.C. Coastal Reserve page. Facebook is useful for interacting with visitors and community members that are interested in Reserve activities. Options for liking, sharing, and commenting on our pages mean that Reserve staff can listen to and educate the public in an informal setting.
- The Facebook pages reach hundreds of people each day (range of people viewing a post between July and October 2013 for Rachel Carson: 250-2,200; N.C. Coastal Reserve: 89-1,300; and Masonboro Island: 470-5,000).

### *Newsletter*

- The Reserve redesigned its newsletter, the [\*Tidal Flat\*](#). The new version comes directly to your email inbox in a colorful new format. Local advisory committee members should have received a copy of the September 2013 issue via email; please let us know if you did not. The issue is also available on our website. A December newsletter is in development.

## Local Advisory Committee Operating Procedures

The Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Operating Procedures document was updated based on input from LAC members and staff, replacing the original version. No substantive changes were recommended by either LAC members or staff and thus, all changes are minor and serve to simplify or clarify without changing process or intent. The document you received is the final updated version with comments inserted to highlight the simplified or clarified language. A final PDF version without the comments will be emailed to committee members in December and posted on the Reserve website. Two updates to note: future committee meeting agendas

will include more detail to preview discussion topics and action items will be employed to follow up on recommendations from the meetings as appropriate. Thank you to all committee members who reviewed the document and provided comments.

### **Site Update & Old Business**

- White poplar was not treated this season. Previous treatment shows mixed results with some standing dead stems and some fully leaved stems. Additional efforts will be needed if this species is to be eradicated.
- Non-native *Gracilaria*, its potential impacts on water chemistry and the associated impacts at the ecosystem level are new concerns. During the peak of the season, large areas of the basin were covered with mats of these algae that were several feet deep. Boat and fishing operations are being disrupted as a result of this growth. Research staff have done some preliminary explorations and several potential research questions have been identified. No successful treatment or removal process is currently known.
- Illegal camping activity continues to be noticeable. Strategies to combat this activity will need to be developed.

### **New Business**

- Habitat Mapping - As part of an effort at the National Estuarine Research Reserve System level, mapping of Reserve habitats was completed this year. This project characterizes, classifies, and displays the habitats within the Reserve utilizing a remote sensing process in which aerial photos are digitized by hand and randomly selected points are visited to assess the accuracy of the remotely assigned classifications. Habitats are classified using a classification system developed by the NERRS to reflect aspects of habitats important to estuarine environments, including degree of exposure to inundation, position within watershed, and type of substrate or vegetation. This process is to be repeated on a periodic basis to assess habitat change over time. Data and maps related to this effort will be available to the public through the Centralized Data Management Office's website.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

- Mr. Owen provided an update regarding nesting success following removal of red foxes during the winter and spring of 2013. The Fort Fisher Recreation Area staff monitors the complete beach strand, including the portion within the Reserve boundary. His report included combined data for the entire area monitored. Three American oystercatcher chicks were fledged from four nesting pairs. One of 52 sea turtle nests was predated. Both sea turtle nests and shorebird nests were monitored daily by Fort Fisher Recreation Area staff.

### **Meeting Follow Up**

- Fall meeting date for 2014: October 23 at 3 pm (Fall meeting previously proposed for November 5).